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To assess student characteristics and learn about the perceptions of college life of entering students and other representative groups of students and faculty, the Four College Study of Institutional Development within the State University of New York was conducted using the College and University Environmental Scale (CUES) and College Student Questionnaire (CSQ) as part of the evaluation instruments. CUES consists of 150 statements about college life and has 5 scales or dimensions: practicality, community, awareness, propriety, and scholarship. The subjects were: 1966 freshmen, 1966-67 upperclass sophomores, juniors and seniors, 1966-67 faculty, 1966 entering freshmen tested as sophomores in 1967, transfer students entering 2 of the colleges in Fall 1966. Scores indicated that the incoming student--both freshman and transfer--can be expected to have high expectations about an institution. But, as residence on the campus increases, expectations decrease to a "reality plateau" which is held by both faculty and upperclass students. A Table containing the CUES scores of each of the colleges' student and faculty groups is included. (JS)

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COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR DIFFERING COLLEGIATE GROUPS*

The Four College Study of Institutional Development within the State University of New York has used the College and University Environmental Scale (CUES) and College Student Questionnaire (CSQ) as a part of its assessment instruments. The CUES is an adaption of the earlier College Characteristics Index by Pace and Stern, while the CSQ was developed for assessing attitudinal as well as biographical data on student characteristics. Both instruments are produced by Educational Testing Service as a part of the Institutional Research Program in Higher Education.

One of the objectives of the Four College Study was a general assessment of student characteristics for inclusion into a data bank. Included in this assessment were the perceptions of college life of entering students and by other representative groups of students and faculty. Within the evaluation of student perceptions the CUES instrument was given.

NATURE OF THE INSTRUMENT

CUES consists of 150 statements about college life--features and facilities of the campus, rules and regulations, faculty, curricula, instruction and examinations, student life, extracurricular organizations,

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and other aspects of the institutional environment which help to define the atmosphere or intellectual-social-cultural climate of the college as students see it. Students who take the test are asked to say whether each statement is generally TRUE or FALSE with reference to their college: TRUE when they think the statement is generally characteristic of the college, is a condition which exists, an event which occurs or might occur, is the way most people feel or act; and FALSE when they think the statement is generally not characteristic of the college. The test is, therefore, a device for obtaining a description of the college from the students themselves, who presumably know what the environment is like because they live in it and are a part of it. What the students are aware of, and agree with some unanimity of impression to be generally true, defines the prevailing campus atmosphere as students perceive it.

There are five scales or dimensions of the CUES:

Practicality, Community, Awareness, Propriety, and Scholarship.

A description of the Practicality scale is a measure of the degree to which a campus environment is perceived as having a practical instrumental emphasis where procedures, personal status, and practical benefits are important. The Community scale describes a friendly, cohesive, group-oriented campus where the environment is supportive and sympathetic to students. The Awareness scale measures the extent that personal, poetic, and political understandings are emphasized as a major concern of the institution. The Propriety scale suggests an environment that is polite and considerate, denotes standards such as caution, thoughtfulness, and decorum. The Scholarship scale desribes the amount of importance placed on the intellectual discipline and scholarship.

The present study was designed to provide information about the perceptions of the campus environment of four colleges between:

(1) 1966 entering freshmen; (2) 1966-1967 upperclass sophomores, juniors, and seniors; (3) 1966-1967 faculty; (4) 1966 entering freshmen tested as sophomores in 1967; (5) transfer students entering two of the colleges in the Fall of 1966.

Procedure

The sample of students and faculty was drawn from the populations at four State University of New York Colleges at Brockport, Cortland, Geneseo, and Oswego. The 1966 freshmen consisted of at least 95% of the entering freshmen at each institution, tested during the Summer or Fall orientation. The upperclass students were tested in the Spring of 1967 and represent a randomly selected sample of 15%, stratified along sex and class divisions. Faculty responses were those responding to a campus mailed survey in the Spring of 1967 and represent from 30-50% sample of teaching and administrative faculty. The sample of 1966 freshmen that were tested in the Spring of 1967 is a 15% randomly selected group stratified by sex.

Results

The results of scale scores on the CUES for the above groups are summarized in Table I.

Freshmen and transfer student scale scores are higher on all five of the scales. These students perceive the colleges to have a highly practical value, congenial atmosphere, to stress awareness and

Table I

CUES Scale Scores for Four College Student and Faculty Groups

	Scores					Percentiles				
	Practicality	Community	Awareness	Propriety	Scholarship	Practicality	Community	Awareness	Propriety	Scholarship
1966 Freshmen										
Brockport	16	22	21	14	23	79	96	91	77	94
Cortland	16	23	21	16	23	79	97	91	87	94
Geneseo	17	20	20	13	19	84	93	88	71	85
Oswego	18	21	17	12	21	87	95	77	64	90
1967 Faculty										
Brockport	3	9	4	6	2	10	37	12	23	12
Cortland	3	6	1	5	1	10	21	5	18	10
Geneseo	9	11	5	5	3	37	50	15	18	15
Oswego	7	7	5	7	5	26	26	15	29	22
1967 Upperclass Students										
Brockport	7	8	3	7	1	26	31	9	29	10
Cortland	8	9	1	4	3	31	37	5	13	15
Geneseo	7	9	4	5	3	26	37	12	18	15
Oswego	11	9	5	5	3	50	37	15	18	15
1966 Freshmen-1967 Sophomores										
Brockport	6	8	6	7	3	21	31	19	29	15
Cortland	5	9	8	6	5	16	37	28	23	22
Geneseo	6	7	7	5	3	21	26	23	18	15
Oswego	5	8	7	6	5	15	31	23	23	22
Transfer Students										
1966-Fall Geneseo	16	22	20	12	17	79	96	88	64	78
1967-Fall-Cortland	15	17	19	9	15	74	83	85	42	70

commitment, tc emphasize conventional standards, and to provide an academic environment. This perception can be better described as an expectation and shows to some extent an unrealistic appraisal of the college environment, or perhaps a hopeful expectation. There is a descending of scale scores when compared for freshmen-transfer-upperclass-faculty, indicating the longer in residence the lower the scale score to a "plateau of reality." Such a reality reflects an operational definition of what faculty and upperclass students perceive. Thus the upperclass students and faculty view the college differently than freshmen as determined from the five scale scores.

The four colleges present no large differences between the scale scores when comparisons are made within the different groups. Transfer students retain their "unrealistic" perceptions of the new college, even after attending college elsewhere and having several more years of maturity than the incoming freshmen. Their perception might be similar to those of any new group--freshmen or graduate students-- who are attending for the first time at whatever school. Thus the incoming student may present a less than realistic appraisal of his new environment when compared to those present in the environment.

Environmental conditions for the Four College students show the scholarship, awareness, and propriety scale scores to be low, while community and practicality to be somewhat and comparatively higher--an expected institutional characteristic of public liberal arts colleges.

Expected higher scale scores for community and practicality, if assessing the four colleges as former teacher's colleges, is not as pronounced. Possibly the change to liberal arts colleges has had some impact on these two scales, or the change in students during the 1965-1966 years has produced a more challenging student who does not view the college as friendly or as practical as did previous students.

Comparisons made to profiles of institutions of higher education show the four colleges, when faculty and upperclass students are used, to be like the larger state universities except for having lower scale scores in scholarship and practicality. Since the larger university can select with higher admission and includes more colleges than arts and sciences, such a condition can be reasonable.

Conclusions

The CUES instrument provides a general evaluation of the student expectations of college and can be used as one of means for the evaluation of the institutional characteristics. CUES scale scores can be used for knowledge concerning certain campus atmosphere.

For the Four Colleges, the incoming student can be expected to have high expectations about the institution, whether a freshman or transfer. As residence on the campus increases, these high expectations decrease to a "reality plateau," held by both faculty and upperclass students.

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